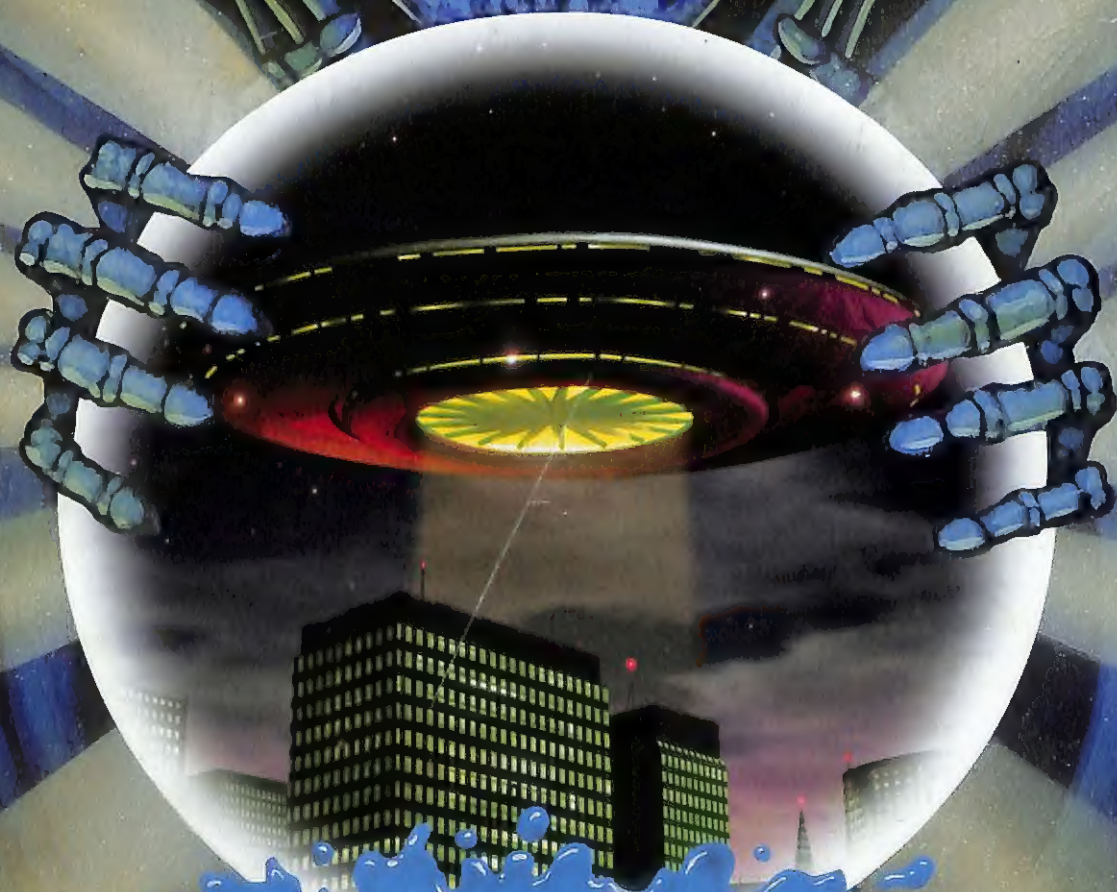


An Eaglemoss Publication

THE SPINE CHILLER Collection

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SCARY!

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THE SPINECHILLER COLLECTION

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Do you dare to be Scared?

Take a trip on the Ghost Train to see if you are brave enough for this magazine!

The best way to read

THE SPINECHILLER COLLECTION

Take the magazine into your bedroom at night.

Draw the curtains and turn off the lights. Use a torch to read the next three pages.

If you make it through the Ghost Train tunnel, there's a surprise awaiting you!

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UFOs



Every week in THE SPINECHILLER Collection you will find

Super Scary Stories

Every issue contains a complete story to make your spine chill! Read about

- The mummy that came to life
- The secret of a dead man's chest
- The monster that waits...

A word of warning – just make sure you don't read these stories when you are all alone!



The evidence is there, photographs exist, several reliable witnesses were questioned, but what's the explanation? How did it happen? The SpineChiller Collection puts together some 'documents' to show how it might have been. Read the files on the true stories of

- The Marie Celeste
- The Faces of Belmez
- The Angels of Mons



This fearsome collection of funky facts, gruesome games and mind-boggling brain twisters will turn you to jelly!

OUR HAUNTED WORLD

We've searched every corner of the world for weird stories which will chill you out! Watch out for

- The spooklights of Marfa, Texas
- The moving coffins of Barbados
- The haunted houses of Britain

Plus some stories a friend of a friend once told me – and she swears they really happened!

These tall tales will really give you the heebie-jeebies.



Do aliens exist? Can psychic healing work on your pet? Is there such a thing as telepathy?

Take a look at some bizarre unsolved mysteries that scientists have never successfully explained.



CLASSIC SERIAL

Some of the greatest spine-tingling stories ever written are retold with background notes and boxes to help boost your word power. Future classics include

- Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde by RL Stevenson
- Frankenstein by Mary Shelley
- Dracula by Bram Stoker

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HORROR

in the Centre Ring



Paul slammed his locker door, and Martin raised his eyebrows looking at his friend.

"What's bothering you?" he asked.

"My mum said I can't go to the party at Tara's house on Saturday because my room's a mess," Paul said in disgust. "I have to spend Saturday cleaning it."

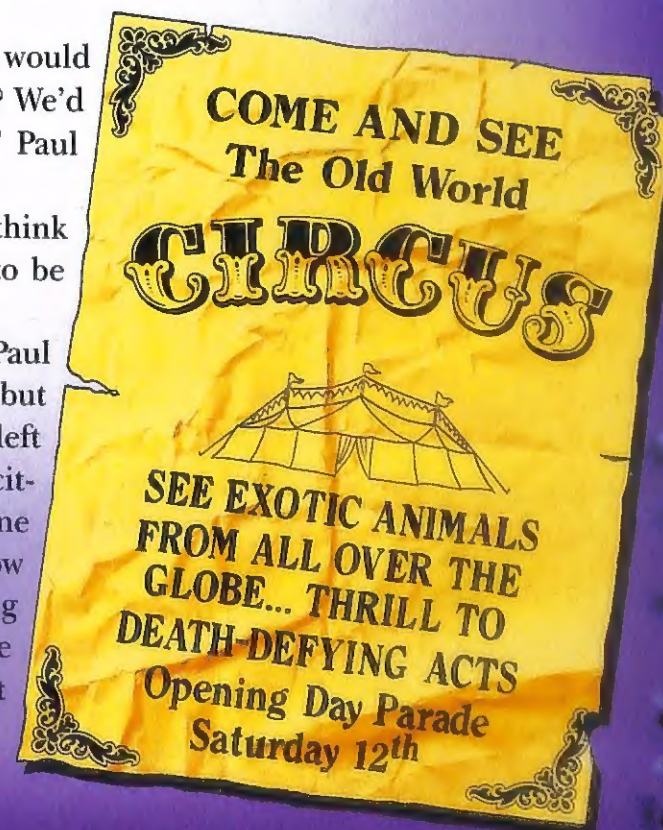
"That's the pits," Martin said sympathetically. "It's your room. You should be able to keep it in any way you want. My dad is always on my case too - do this, do that."

"All parents ever do is nag," Paul grumbled. "It seems as if I never do anything right. I ought to just leave home. Then I could do whatever I want."

"Yeah," Martin agreed. "That would be great, but where could we go? We'd have to get jobs or something." Paul studied the floor thoughtfully.

"I don't know... yet. But I'll think of something. I'd do anything to be out on my own."

Over the next two weeks, Paul and Martin talked of nothing but what they would do if they left home. "Look," Martin said excitedly as they walked to school one morning, pulling a bright yellow flyer from his pocket and waving it in the air. Paul grabbed the paper, opened it, and read it aloud:



Paul turned and looked quizzically at Martin. "Sounds OK, but so what?"

"Think about it," Martin answered, tapping the side of his head with his finger. "Last year I read a book about a kid who ran away and joined the circus. It's perfect. No school. And it's like an unwritten rule or something in the circus that nobody asks any questions."

Paul glanced down and saw that the opening day parade was scheduled for that weekend.

"They'll be in town for three days," Martin continued. "And I say that when they leave, we go with them."

"Oh, come on," Paul said sceptically. "They're not going to take us. They could get into trouble."

"Not if we hide out in one of their vans," Martin assured him. "We could sneak in at night. By the time they find us, we'll be a zillion miles from this crummy place. Maybe I can even learn to be a lion tamer! I'd love to be in an act like that with the big cats."

Paul re-read the flyer. "Well," he said, nodding, "at least we can check it out."



Early on Saturday morning, Paul and Martin rode their bikes to the High Street. They found a good spot close to the kerb and waited with expectation for the circus parade to arrive.

Before long, dozens of other happy spectators joined them, and soon the merry sound of the approaching circus band blended with the buzz of the crowd.

"Look! Look, an elephant!" a little girl squealed, delightedly. Paul craned his neck to see the huge animal rounding the corner at the end of the block. The elephant was wearing a colourful cape with spangles that glittered in the sun. On its head was a cap topped with tall, fluffy feathers. Behind the elephant was a parade of masked performers, clowns and several costumed people on tall stilts.

"Wow!" Martin exclaimed as the lion and tiger cages approached. "Look at that! Isn't it great?"

The wild cats roared threateningly at the crowd and paced back and forth, as if they were upset and anxious. Riding atop one of the cages was a man dressed in a black silk tuxedo. He had a top hat and a

long, dark cape lined with crimson silk the colour of blood. In his hand he held a whip, which he cracked every now and then. Paul stared in awe at the man who, as he passed in front of the boys, turned and gave them a knowing grin.

"He must be the ringmaster," Martin commented.

"This is the coolest thing I've ever seen!" Paul exclaimed, watching as the elephant led the parade on its way to the fair-ground. "I'd do anything to be a part of the circus. Do you really think we could just...?"

All at once, a shadow fell across the two boys and Paul became silent. He turned to see a clown on stilts leaning over him and Martin. In spite of his painted-on smile, the clown seemed more menacing than funny. He held out a silvery helium balloon to Paul.

"Is that for me?" Paul asked apprehensively. The clown didn't answer. He simply smiled more widely, exposing a row of sparkling white teeth. Slowly Paul reached up to take the balloon.

"Whoa!" he blurted out, jerking his hand back and letting go of the string. The icy cold touch of the clown's long fingers had taken him by surprise. Looking up, he watched as the balloon escaped, floating higher and higher into the air. The clown backed away and took his place in the parade.

"What was that about?" Martin asked.

"I'm not sure," Paul answered, trying to rub the clown's chill from his fingers.





That night Paul was awakened by the sound of his mother's worried voice on the telephone. He listened carefully, but only caught snatches of conversation.

"How long?" he heard his mum ask. "No, I haven't... he's asleep... I'll ask him... Don't worry, I'm sure he won't go far... You can't blame yourself... I'll call you back." Paul shut his eyes and pretended to be asleep as his mum opened his bedroom door.

"Paul?" she said gently. He didn't move. "Paul?" she said a little louder. "Please wake up. It's about Martin."

Paul opened his eyes and asked, "What about Martin?" His mother seemed worried.

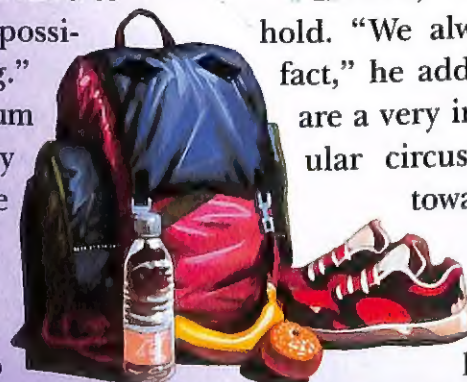
"I just spoke to his dad. It seems that they had a big fight tonight, and now Martin is missing. His backpack is gone, too. Do you have any idea where he might be? Has he said anything to you about running away?"

"No," Paul lied. He tried hard to keep his voice as steady as possible. "I don't know anything."

"Are you sure?" his mum asked again. "This is really important. His parents are frantic."

"I said I didn't know," Paul mumbled, rolling over and pretending to go back to sleep. As soon as his mum left his room, he jumped up and pulled on jeans, a sweatshirt and a pair of trainers. He had already prepared his backpack with snacks, bottled water and some extra clothes.

"This wasn't the plan," he grumbled to himself, as he slipped out of his bedroom window and headed for the fairground. "What's Martin doing? He's going to mess up everything."



The circus grounds seemed eerily quiet. Paul slipped into the main tent and looked round. "Martin," he called out in a harsh whisper, but his voice echoed off the empty stands.

"How am I supposed to find him now?" Paul muttered, backing towards the exit. Then all at once he felt himself gripped powerfully by the shoulders.

"I thought you might be along soon to join your friend." Paul twisted round to look into the shadowy face of the ringmaster from the parade.

"Is Martin here?" Paul's voice was shaky. "Indeed," the man said, releasing his hold. "We always welcome runaways. In fact," he added in a sinister tone, "they are a very important part of this particular circus." The ringmaster leaned towards Paul. "So what is it, my boy? Parents don't understand you? A problem with school? No matter... we have a place for you here. I think you will fit in quite well."

Paul noticed movement behind the ringmaster and saw that three other performers had entered the tent. The odd clown from the parade was among them.

"I - I've changed my mind," Paul said fearfully. "I want to go home."

"I'm afraid it's too late for that." The ringmaster laughed coldly, then reached out for him.

"No!" Paul shouted, dodging to the side of the ringmaster. Managing to evade the scowling clown and the others, he raced from the tent. But when he got to the exit, he saw that it was now blocked by several weird-looking circus performers. He quickly pressed himself into the shadows along the tent, almost tasting the fear that was welling up inside him. Then looking from left to right, he made a dash to the shelter of the Fun House wall. He took cover behind a large decorative cage parked beside the wall.

Nearby, the low rumble of a lion gave him the creeps. His only thought was getting away from this terrible place and back to the safety of his own home. Once he was back there, he would never complain about anything again, and he'd keep his room sparkling clean.



All at once Paul heard his name being called softly. It was his friend's voice, but it sounded strangely different... altered... as if Martin were having trouble forming the words.

"Martin, where are you?" Paul demanded.

"Here!" the deep,

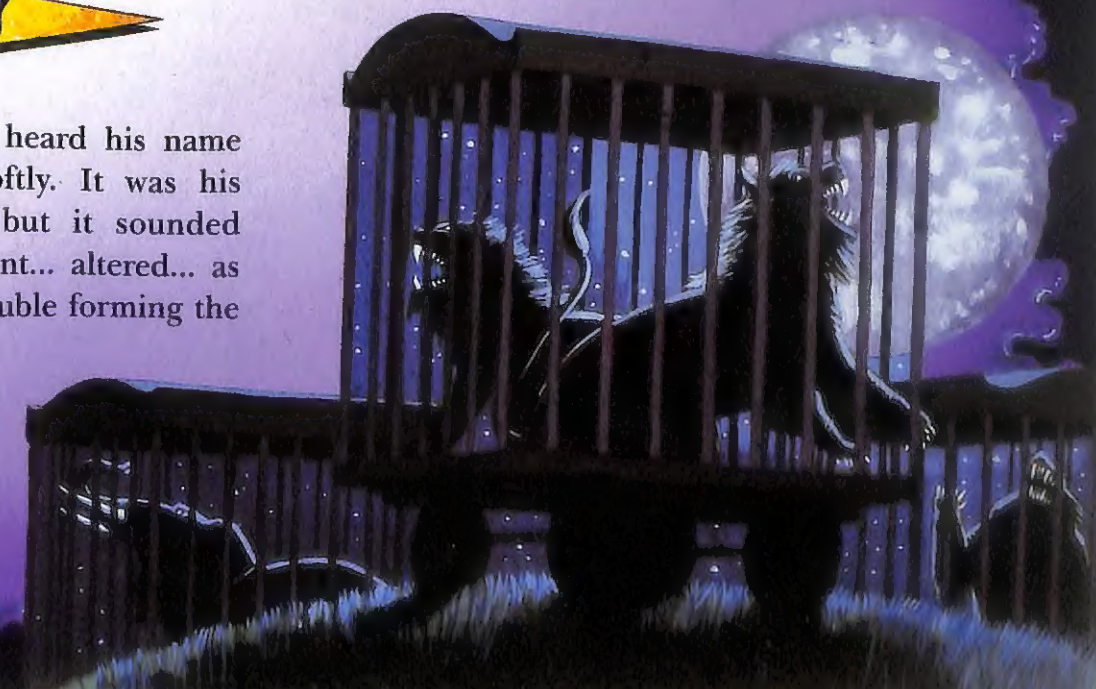
foreign-sounding voice responded from the cage behind him. Paul turned cautiously. And then he felt as if the world had suddenly flipped upside down. There, in front of him, was his best friend... changed... transformed into some sort of horrifying mutant - half tiger, half human.

"Martin?" Paul croaked, barely able to recognize his friend. Where Martin had once had hands and feet, he now had large paws tipped with gleaming black talons. His face was covered with coarse orange and black fur, and his extended snout ended in a mouth filled with sharp, ivory-coloured fangs.

"You've got to get away while you still can and get help. It's our only hope," Martin moaned. "The ringmaster has some sort of power. He'll do it to you, too," he warned, holding out his large paws.

"The ringmaster?" Paul asked, staring at his friend with a mixture of fascination and horror. "But how did he do this to you?"

"I don't know for sure," Martin said. "But whatever you do, don't put on..." He stopped abruptly and shrank back in fear. "They're coming!" Martin shrieked, retreating to the back of his cage. "Hide!"



Without hesitation, Paul darted through the curtained entrance to the Fun House. It was dully lit inside by tiny bulbs along the floor that led the way through the gloomy corridor. Slowly, carefully, Paul edged along, straining to hear if anyone was coming after him. Then, turning a corner, he suddenly came face to face with dozens of mirror images of himself, all grotesque and distorted.

Choking back a scream, he put out his hands and pressed his fingers against the glass, trying to feel for an exit out of the horrible place. Dripping with sweat caused by fear and the hot, stagnant air surrounding him, Paul felt as if he would suffocate if he didn't escape soon. All around him were deformed apparitions of himself trapped in the mirrors reflecting his panic, which grew as he heard the sounds of someone entering the Fun House and moving towards him.



Hurrying along, Paul suddenly stumbled through an unmirrored archway and into a small room that appeared to be used for storage. He looked around for a good hiding place, but saw only disorderly piles of clothing,



masks and props. In desperation, he burrowed under a mound of silky costumes, but found that there wasn't quite enough to cover him... and the sound of footsteps was getting closer.

"What am I going to do?" His mind raced, near hysteria. Then he noticed an elaborate mask. With only seconds to spare, he slipped it over his head so that he was completely concealed. Holding his breath, he remained perfectly still as someone stepped into the room, apparently looked round, and then left.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Paul slid from his hiding place and tried to pull the confining mask from his head. But it wouldn't budge. Clawing at it in growing terror, he stumbled back into the hall of mirrors. From dozens of different angles, he saw himself with the ferocious head of a tiger.

"No!" he screamed, running through the dark corridor, as the mask burned into his own skin. Once outside, Paul found himself surrounded by a dozen glaring performers.

"Get it off me!" he screamed to them. "Please, get it off!"

But the words were difficult for Paul to form with the long, sharp teeth that were emerging from his growing snout, and they came out sounding deep and foreign.

The ringmaster stepped forward and grabbed him by the arm.

"Your new home is ready," the man announced with a sneer. He twisted Paul round to look at the cage that had once held his best friend. Now a wild tiger paced back and forth inside.

"You and your friend wanted to join the circus," the ringmaster snarled. "Well, you got your wish." He shoved Paul roughly into the cage with what was once Martin.

"Now you boys play nicely!" He laughed cruelly. "You're going to be together for a very long time."



THE END

OUR HAUNTED WORLD

This week we investigate strange happenings on the west coast of America.



Human Bats!

Native Americans tell tales of a bizarre, ghostly bat with a human face. Is it a lost spirit? Let's hope that it doesn't use its echo-location skills to home in on you!

▼ **ROCKY ROLLERS**
Scientific research has so far failed to solve the mystery of Death Valley's moving stones.



MOVING STONES OF DEATH VALLEY

In California's Death Valley, the mysterious moving stones of Racetrack Playa have baffled scientists for years. Scattered over the dried-up lake bed are stones which range in size from small pebbles to great boulders. These stones can apparently move, on their own, across distances of

hundreds of metres! Their clear, furrowed tracks can be straight, curved or even zig-zagged. One research project decided that, after rain, strong winds could be blowing the stones over the slippery, muddy surface. A 1995 study disproved this theory when the only things that could be made to slide round on the mud in very high winds were the researchers themselves! These weird, rolling stones really know how to hang on to their secret!

Twist and spin!

There's a Mystery Spot near Santa Cruz where all the trees within a 15-metre circle grow twisted, like corkscrews! People who actually stand in this strange area become dizzy.



▲ **WAS THIS CAR JINXED?**
Though adored by its owner, some people thought that James Dean's spooky car was under a curse!

CURSE OF THE KILLER CAR

Film star James Dean's pride and joy was his new silver Porsche 550 Spyder racing car. English actor, Alec Guinness, was spooked by it and told Dean, "If you get into that car, you'll be found dead in it by this time next week." Guinness then apologised, saying that he felt as if someone else had spoken those words.

Days later, Dean's girlfriend begged him not to drive the Porsche to a race meeting. He ignored her – and was killed instantly in a car crash in Cholame, California. Later, three people driving cars containing the Porsche's salvaged spare parts were killed, while several others were badly injured. The remains of the Porsche emerged, unscathed, from a garage fire which had gutted all the other cars!

GIANT MUMMIES OF LOVELOCK CAVE

In 1911, miners unearthed the mummified remains of several red-haired giant humans in Lovelock Cave, Nevada. They couldn't believe their eyes – even the smallest was 2 metres tall, while the biggest was a mind-boggling 2.5 metres! The local Native Americans, the Paiute tribe, have told stories of wars with giants, whom they called Si-te-cahs, for generations. Scientists seemed uninterested, so locals gathered up

the bones, most of which were later destroyed in a fire. But one huge skull from the cave-tomb of mysterious mummies has survived.



▲ This giant skull – over 30cm long – is now in Nevada's Humboldt Museum.



THE VANISHING HITCH-HIKER

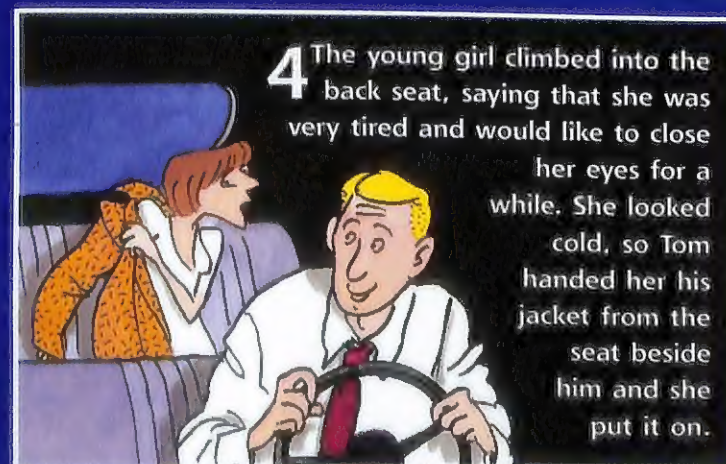
This happened to Tom, a Californian friend of a friend...

1 He had been out of town for a few days and was driving back home to Los Angeles. He was tired, it was getting late and a light rain was starting to fall.

The road was dark and deserted and, as he passed through some woods, he had to strain his eyes to see where he was going.



2 Suddenly, his headlights caught something white at the side of the road. Slowing down, he spotted a young girl in a light-coloured dress.



4 The young girl climbed into the back seat, saying that she was very tired and would like to close her eyes for a while. She looked cold, so Tom handed her his jacket from the seat beside him and she put it on.

3 Although she wasn't hitch-hiking, Tom stopped the car and asked her if she would like a lift. She said that she lived in a town which Tom would pass through along his route.



5 An hour later, Tom pulled up at the address he had been given. He turned round to tell the girl that they'd arrived – but the back seat was empty! The girl and his jacket had gone... but how? He had not stopped the car once since he had picked up the girl.

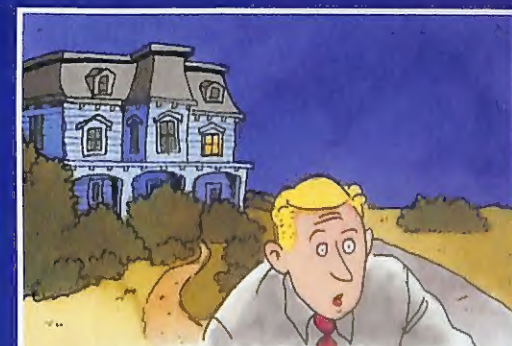


6 Confused, Tom sat in the car wondering what to do. He decided to see if the people who lived in the house could shed any light on what had happened. He walked up the neglected path to the house and rang the doorbell.

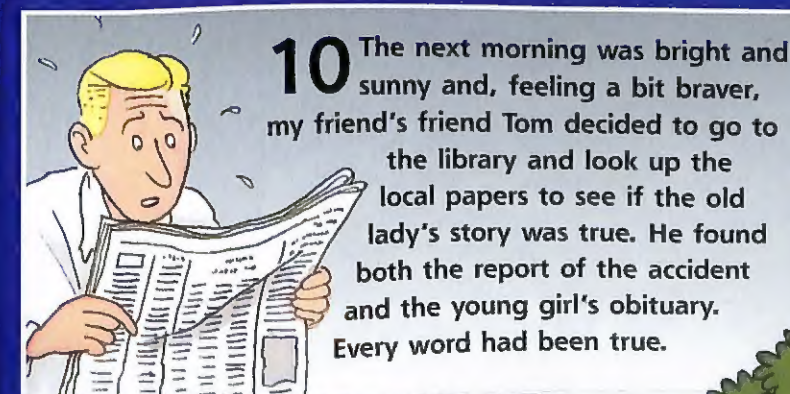
7 The door was opened by an elderly woman. Tom started to tell his story but, by the time he came to the end, it seemed a very unlikely tale. The old woman, however, did not seem surprised – just very sad. "Wait here a moment," she said and went inside to fetch something. As Tom waited on the doorstep, he began to regret ever ringing the doorbell.



8 The woman returned – with a framed photo of the girl he had picked up! "This was my daughter," she said. "Five years ago, she died in a car crash near where you found her. I think she is trying to come home."



9 The young man was stunned. He mumbled his sympathy and returned to the car. When he got home, he looked everywhere for his jacket – then he remembered that he had lent it to the girl.



10 The next morning was bright and sunny and, feeling a bit braver, my friend's friend Tom decided to go to the library and look up the local papers to see if the old lady's story was true. He found both the report of the accident and the young girl's obituary. Every word had been true.

11 On his way home, he passed the cemetery where the paper had said the young girl was buried. It didn't take him long to spot the grave. There, to his amazement, was his jacket, draped over the dead girl's headstone!





RASPUTIN

Special Investigation File: 214
Subject: the strange power of
Grigori Rasputin (known as the
Mad Monk), born 1870;
murdered 29 December 1916
Location: Russia

SpineChiller creates a file

BACKGROUND OF VICTIM

Rasputin was born into a peasant family in Siberia, Russia. As a young man, he became a monk and wandered from place to place. He discovered that he was able to cure the sick by praying at their bedside. He became known as a holy man and was said to be able to see into the future. Rasputin gained great influence at the Russian Court through healing Prince Alexei, the Tsar's son and heir. The nobles resented the power of a peasant and this may have led to his murder.

Events leading to death

Rasputin was murdered on 29 December 1916. A group of nobles invited him to dinner and tried to poison him with cyanide. This had no effect. They then tried to shoot Rasputin, but he escaped into the freezing night. His tormentors caught him, beat him with an iron bar, then bound him in chains and threw him into the icy River Neva while he was still alive. When Rasputin's body was found, he had escaped from his chains and had been trying to claw through the ice, before he drowned. Prince Yussopov was accused of his murder.



Evidence no: 214/1
RASPUTIN, wearing
monk's robes.



Evidence no: 214/3
PRINCE ALEXEI
and his mother,
the Tsarina.

DOCTOR'S REPORT

From birth, Prince Alexei has suffered from haemophilia, a dangerous hereditary disease that prevents his blood from clotting. The Russian monk, Rasputin, has cured the young prince on three occasions when I and my fellow practitioners could do little. In 1907, the prince fell and began to bleed. We could not help him. Rasputin prayed for him and the prince's bleeding stopped.

In 1912, the prince was once again at death's door after a fall. Rasputin was in Siberia so he telegraphed the Tsarina, telling her not to worry. As soon as the telegram arrived, the boy began to recover.

In 1915, I also witnessed that one of the prince's heavy nosebleeds stopped as soon as Rasputin entered his room. I cannot find any medical explanation for this man's strange healing powers.

Signed

C. A. Hobbes

TOP SECRET

A SINISTER COINCIDENCE?

Rasputin, the mad monk, was in exile in Siberia in June 1914, when an attempt was made on his life. It turns out that this took place at exactly the same time on the very same day that Archduke Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated. This was a historic coincidence as the archduke's death was the event that triggered off the First World War.



Evidence no: 214/2
YUSSOPOV,
Rasputin's
murderer.



Evidence no: 214/4
Cartoon showing
Rasputin's power
over the Tsar.

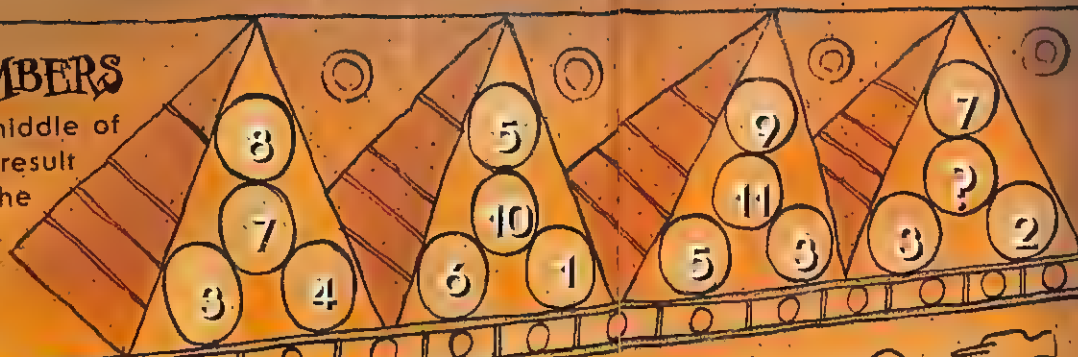
My dearest daughter Maria,
I fear that my life is in danger
and that soon I shall be
murdered. These are troubled
times in Russia. I want you to
know that if I am killed by a peasant,
then the monarchy in Russia is safe.
However, if I am murdered by a
noble, the Tsar and all his family
will die within two years.

Evidence no: 214/5
Letter from Rasputin
predicting his own
murder and the
Russian revolution.

EGYPTIAN PUZZLES

Pyramid Numbers

The number in the middle of each triangle is the result of a sum involving the other 3 numbers. Can you work out the missing number in the last triangle?



Fantastic Facts

Did you know that you can sharpen a razor blade by putting it under a model four-sided pyramid? The blade's sharp edges must face east-west and the pyramid's base must align with the magnetic north-south and east-west. Why it works, no one knows!

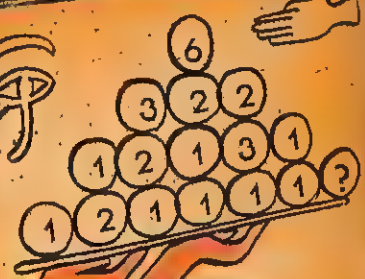
Hieroglyphs

Ancient Egyptian writing consisted of symbols called 'hieroglyphs'. In this puzzle, each hieroglyph represents a letter and always stands for the same one. Each of the words made up of hieroglyphs has a clue to its meaning next to it. Read the clues to work out what each word and letter is.

- 1-SPREAD ON BREAD
- 2-PIG'S FOOT
- 3-HOLDS LIQUID
- 4-HALL
- 5-NONE
- 6-BLACK WOOD
- 7-MORE THAN

MISSING NUMBER

The rows of numbers have a hidden logic. Can you work out what it is and replace the question mark with a number?



Fascinating Facts

Pyramids were built with false walls and entrances, but despite this, most pyramids were robbed within a couple of hundred years of being built. That is why the Egyptians stopped building pyramids and buried their pharaohs in tombs tunnelled into cliffs instead.

TANGLED MUMMIES

Two pairs of mummies are wrapped in the same bandage! Can you work out which two pairs they are?

Fun facts

The Pharaoh's pets were mummified and buried with him to keep him company in the next world!

Foul Facts

In Victorian times, if you really wanted to impress your friends, you could buy the hand or foot of a mummy and display it in a glass case at home.

You scared the life out of me!

I want my mummy!

It's a wrap!

Hey! It's the mummy rap!

PYRAMID CROSSWORD

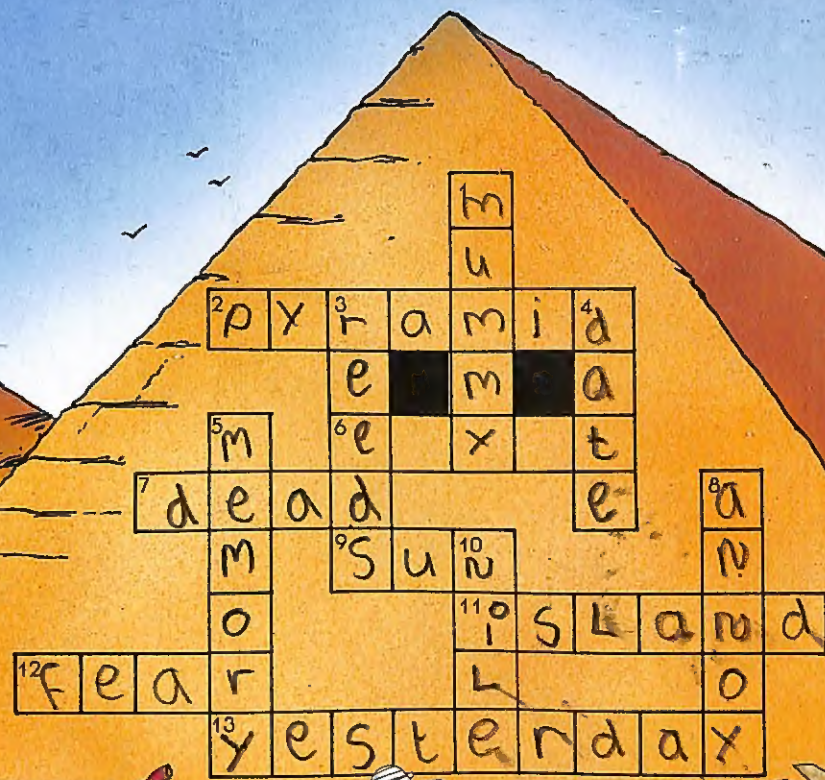
Look at the clues, then see if you can fill in the grid.

CLUES ACROSS

- 2 A great Egyptian monument
- 6 An African country
- 7 No longer alive
- 9 Shines by day
- 11 Land surrounded by water
- 12 To be afraid
- 13 The day before

CLUES DOWN

- 1 A preserved corpse
- 3 Plants found in the river
- 4 Fruit of the palm tree
- 5 Something remembered
- 8 Irritate
- 10 Egyptian river



EGYPTIAN RECIPE

Don't try this at home!

1 Take one dead body and put it on the table.

2 First remove the brain. Put a chisel up the left nostril and break through to the skull. Take your hook, put it up the nostril and wiggle it about a bit. This loosens and cuts up the brain. Then twist the hook and yank out the bits of brain.

3 Next, cut open the body. Drag out the lungs, liver and intestines (but leave the heart). Put them in canopic storage jars and seal them.

4 Clean the body and leave it in a salt bath for 40 days.

5 When the body is ready, take it out of the salt bath. Smother it with oil to stop the skin from cracking. Pour liquid resin over it to preserve it.

6 Stuff the body cavity with rags and sweet-smelling herbs. Coat the bandages with resin and wrap round the mummy.

Fiendish Facts

In the 1700s, powdered mummy was a favourite medicine!

Oh, ha, ha, ha! Please stop tickling!

ANSWERS

Across: 2. Pyramids, 6. Egypt, 7. Dead, 9. Sun, 11. Island, 12. Fear, 13. Yesterday. Down: 1. Mummy, 3. Papyrus, 4. Date, 5. Memory, 8. Annoy, 10. Nile.

The things I do for my master...

CLASSIC



SERIAL

Chapter 1

The Phantom of the Opera

"We've seen the ghost!" screamed a young dancer, bursting into the dressing room of the star ballerina, La Sorelli. "He came through the wall in the passage!"

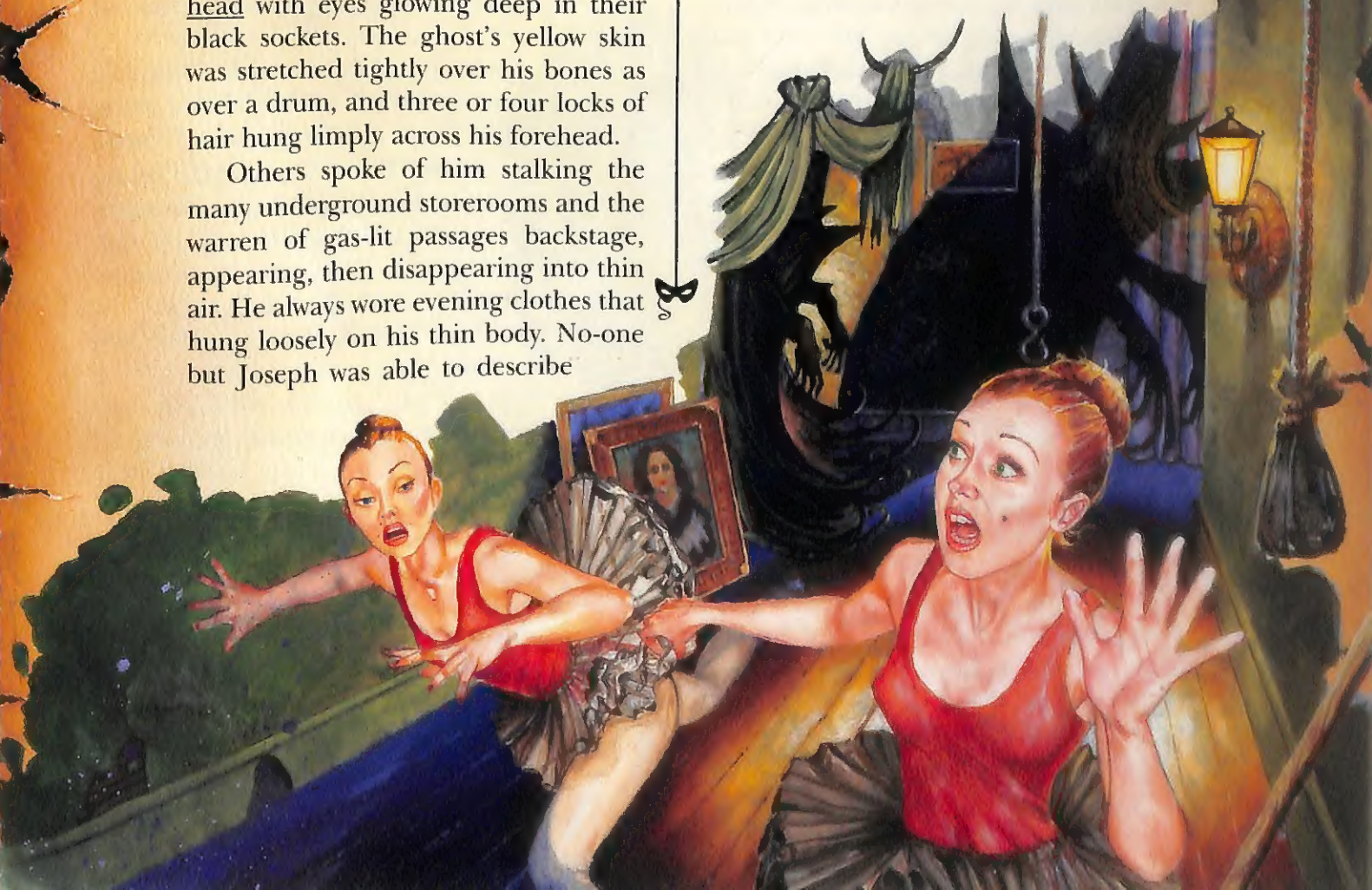
"He looks like a walking skeleton – and his eyes...!" cried another.

La Sorelli tried to calm the young girls, but she was uneasy. Over the last few months people had talked about nothing but the opera ghost. Joseph, a scene shifter, had met the ghost coming up the staircase from the cellars. He described the ghost's face as a death's head with eyes glowing deep in their black sockets. The ghost's yellow skin was stretched tightly over his bones as over a drum, and three or four locks of hair hung limply across his forehead.

Others spoke of him stalking the many underground storerooms and the warren of gas-lit passages backstage, appearing, then disappearing into thin air. He always wore evening clothes that hung loosely on his thin body. No-one but Joseph was able to describe

his face, which seemed to be hidden by a mask – but they all remembered his glowing eyes.

"Mother says Joseph should not have said anything about the ghost – he doesn't like to be talked about," said Meg Giry, one of the young dancers. Meg's mother was the conciierge who unlocked the private boxes on the Grand Tier. The girls gathered round Meg, asking questions about the ghost. "Mother says he has his own box. She has often heard him in there, but she has never seen him." Meg told them.





"What nonsense you talk!" La Sorelli interrupted the gossiping dancers. "Come on, pull yourselves together, it's time for our performance." The ballerina led the young dancers up to the stage for their part in the evening's celebration gala.

When their dance was over, they waited in the wings to listen to Christine Daae, a new young opera singer who was making her début. On this special night she seemed to be inspired and sang so beautifully that the audience went mad, rising to their feet, clapping and cheering. Christine was so overcome, she fainted and had to be carried to her dressing room.

A young man had been watching Christine intently from his box. His name was Count Raoul de Chagny. When he saw her collapse, he went quite pale. Leaving his box, he rushed backstage to her dressing room. There, he ordered everyone out of the room except the doctor. Then he fell to his knees beside the unconscious singer and watched her as she slowly came round.

"Are you feeling better?" he asked her.

"Who are you?" whispered the girl.

"We used to play together when we were young and lived in the country. I have been coming every night to hear you sing," replied the count. "Could I speak to you in private?"

Christine looked troubled. "Another time," she said, then added, "I feel much better now, but I need to be alone. Please go, both of you." The doctor and the young man left the room. Raoul lingered outside, hoping to speak to her when she came out. Suddenly, from the passageway, he became aware of voices inside the room.

"Christine," said a man's voice. "You must love me."

"How can you talk like that?" the girl said sadly. "I sing only for you and tonight I gave you my soul."

Raoul's heart beat so loud, he feared they would hear it! He hid in the shadows, hoping to catch a glimpse of the man. But when eventually the door opened, it was Christine leaving alone. Raoul went into the room. He struck a match and looked about – but the room was completely empty!

In the director's office of the opera house, the retiring managers were handing over the keys to their two successors, Moncharmin and Richards. They also gave them a strange book.

"These are the terms of your employment and we have to draw your attention to the final two clauses." At the end of the book, in red ink, was written: 'The manager will pay the opera ghost the sum of 20,000 francs a month. Box 5 in the Grand Tier will be at the disposal of the opera ghost for every performance.'

"Why should we agree to this?" cried Richards, "We don't even believe in the opera ghost!"

"You soon will if you do not keep to his conditions," answered the retiring managers. "Because if you don't, something disastrous will happen."

At that moment, the door burst open and the stage manager rushed in. "Joseph has been found hanging in the cellar under the stage!" he gasped. "I went for help to cut him down and when we returned, the body was no longer hanging from the rope. It was lying on the ground and the rope had disappeared!"

"Now you see what happens when the ghost is angry," said one of the retiring managers, nervously.

"If the ghost really does exist, why didn't you have him arrested when he came to his box?" asked Moncharmin.

"How could we?" the retiring managers replied "We have never seen him in the box."

The two new managers looked at each other and burst out laughing "We'll see about that," they said. "No ghost will stop us making some money by selling Box 5!"

A few days after Moncharmin and Richards had taken over the running of the

WORD POWER

death's head – another name for a skull.

conciierge (say con-see-airj) – French door keeper, usually a woman.

gala – a special performance.

début (say day-boo) – the first performance by a person or group of people.

aria – a song sung by one person in an opera.

petrified – terrified, unable to move

chandelier – a frame, often decorated with glass, with branches for holding lights.

opera house, they received a letter written in red ink.

'I am disagreeably surprised to find that, on arriving at the opera house to hear that charming singer, Christine Daae, my box had been sold. I understood you knew my terms and if you wish to live in peace, you must not take away my private box. Your obedient servant, Opera Ghost.'

"No ghost is going to dictate to us," the two men agreed. However, at the very next opera performance, they were sent for because of a disturbance in Box 5.

Some people were complaining that they had been turned out of the box by a strange, ghostly voice that said that the box was occupied, although there was nobody there!



The managers summoned Madame Giry, the concierge, but all she would say was that every time the ghost's box had been sold, bad luck followed. The managers questioned her closely.

"I've never seen the ghost myself," she said, "but once he asked me for a footstool. And he always leaves me money after a performance." When Madame Giry had left, the managers agreed that the poor old dear was probably mad and gave instructions that she should be sacked. They also decided to use the box themselves the following Saturday to watch a performance of the opera *Faust*.

Before Saturday arrived, the managers found a letter from the opera ghost telling them to reinstate Madame Giry and to let Christine take the main part on the Saturday night. Carlotta, the leading singer, also received a note. It warned her that if she appeared in the opera on Saturday, a misfortune worse than death would occur when she tried to sing.

They ignored the notes and, on the evening of the performance, the managers took their seats in Box 5. "Do you see that woman in the centre of the stalls?" Moncharmin said, pointing to a large lady in black. "That's our new concierge for the Grand Tier. I've given her free tickets for the opera tonight."

The curtain rose and Carlotta began to sing. She was in excellent form and the audience applauded loudly. In the interval, Richards said, "You see, everything's going well."

The curtain rose again and Carlotta entered to thunderous applause. It was her big moment – the grand *aria* in the second act. Her first note was thrilling, and then – CROAK! The audience gasped and Carlotta went pale.

She tried again, but all she could produce was an horrendous CROAK! Poor, despairing Carlotta. The uproar in the house was indescribable and in Box 5, the two new managers were petrified. They both felt there was someone in the box, someone standing behind them, breathing over them. Sweat poured down their faces. Too frightened to move or turn round, they heard a voice whisper, "She's singing tonight to bring the chandelier down". As they looked up, the two uttered an awful cry. The huge chandelier in the centre of the ceiling creaked and suddenly plunged downwards. Amid shouts of fear, it smashed into the centre of the stalls – killing the new concierge of Box 5!



UFOs

There have been reports of mysterious objects in the sky since the beginning of time. The Romans, for example, saw blazing shields – these were probably meteors, but no one knew about meteors in Roman times. In fact, 90% of UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects) have logical explanations and often become IFOs (Identified Flying Objects). What of those that don't?

Likely explanations

Could they possibly be spaceships piloted by aliens from another part of the galaxy? Are they simply the product of an over-active imagination? Or are they military aircraft that the government wants to keep top secret?

People all over the world have taken photos of UFOs only to find that the strange object in the sky was really the tail fin of a plane at an odd angle.



▲ IS IT REAL?
This photo of a typical 'flying saucer' was taken in New Mexico, USA, in 1963.

Or it might be the reflection of a street lamp, or a curious type of cloud. Other people actually tamper with the photographs to create UFOs of their own! This gets them nowhere as fakes can be detected quite easily.

Flying saucer

When did the UFO become a Flying Saucer? This happened in 1947, when pilot Kenneth Arnold spotted a group of nine objects flying in formation between the snow-

capped peaks of the Cascade mountains in the USA. He had never seen anything like them before and, as soon as he landed,

Arnold reported them. He said each one moved "like a saucer skipping across water". A witty journalist, fixing on this image, called the strange objects 'flying saucers'. The name stuck and UFOs suddenly took on the shape of saucers!



▲ FAMOUS FRAUD
Adamski's photos of cigar-shaped carriers and scout ships from Venus proved to be fake pictures using models!



▲ UFO CRASH?
Most photos of UFOs show them in the sky. This picture, taken in Italy, is unusual because it shows a grounded UFO. Is this a case of UFO engine failure...?

► SKY WATCH
Kenneth Arnold's sighting sparked off several magazines about UFOs.

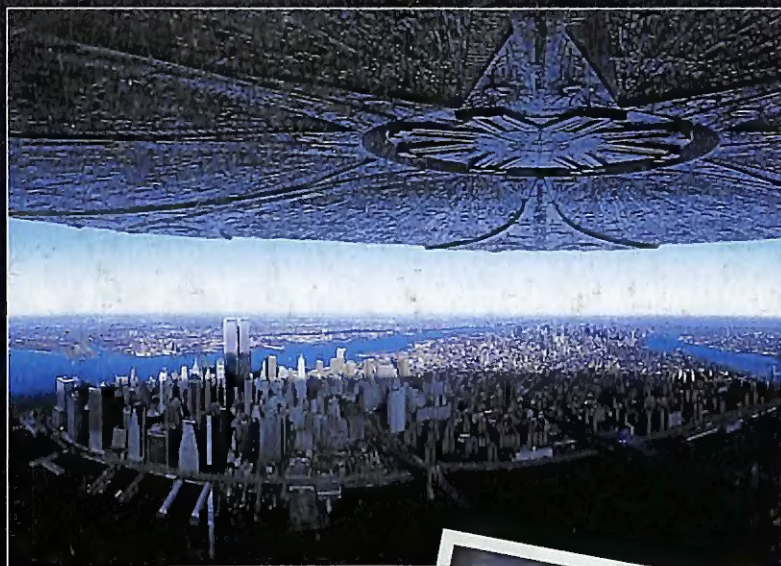


FIRST UFO FATALITY

Unfortunately, UFO hunting claimed its first victim in 1948. Captain Thomas Mantell and three other US Air Force pilots were on a training exercise in their P51 Mustang aeroplanes, when their radio controller asked them to investigate a UFO. As the planes were not fitted with oxygen masks, the three pilots stopped their search around 12,000 feet. However, Captain Mantell kept after the craft, reporting "a metallic object, tremendous in size... I'm trying to close in for a better look." But Mantell lost consciousness from lack of oxygen and the plane crashed.

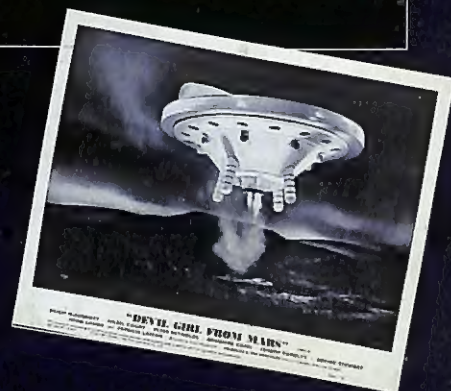
A secret revealed

The 'official' version was that Mantell had mistaken the planet Venus for the UFO, but no one believed this. It was only years later that the truth came out. What Mantell had seen was a high altitude balloon that was being secretly tested by the US Navy. Had Mantell's airbase been informed of this, Mantell's life would have been saved.



▲► **AT THE MOVIES**
UFOs in science fiction films have changed over the decades, from the 1950s space ship (right) to the technological city of the more recent 'Independence Day'.

▼ **SHAPES IN THE SKY**
These UFO-like shapes are caused by small whirlwinds.



◀ **IS IT THE WEATHER?**

Some people believe that UFOs can be explained by some form of natural process, such as atmospheric pressure, that we don't yet fully understand.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE A UFO

- 1 If you can, make a sketch or take a photo of it. Note down all the details of shape, size, colour, speed, direction and weather conditions.
- 2 If other people saw it too, take down their names and addresses. Take notes of their impressions.
- 3 Contact the local police or airport.
- 4 If you want to contact a reputable UFO group, look for addresses at the back of books on UFOs. You can also ask at the library.

